

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (previously presented): A method of conducting an electronic transaction over a public communications network, with a payment account number having a certain amount of available funds, using a payment network linked to a check site, comprising:

- (a) generating a secret key associated with said payment account number;
- (b) using said secret key to generate a message authentication code specific to said transaction;
- (c) generating an authorization request message including said message authentication code;
- (d) forwarding said authorization request message over said payment network to said check site for verifying the authenticity of said message authentication code;
- (e) verifying the message authentication code by said check site using said secret key;
- (f) responding to said authorization request message over said payment network based on said available funds and said transaction amount.

2. (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein said authorization request message is routed over said payment network based on a special bank identification number corresponding to said check site.

3. (previously presented): The method of claim 2, further comprising: providing software at a user location for generating said secret key.

4. (previously presented): The method of claim 3, wherein said payment account number is issued by an issuer and said response is provided by said issuer.

5. (previously presented): The method of claim 4, wherein said authorization request message includes an expiration date field and said message authentication code is placed in said expiration date field.

6. (currently amended): A method of conducting an electronic transaction over a public communications network with a check site and a payment account number having a bank identification number (BIN) associated with said check site comprising:

- (a) generating a per-card key associated with said payment account number;
- (b) generating a message authentication code (MAC) using said per-card key;
- (c) generating a MAC verification request including said payment account number and said MAC;
- (d) verifying said MAC;
- (e) based on said verification, and based on a transaction sequence number associated with the electronic transaction, creating an expected transaction sequence number (ETSN) for said MAC;
- (f) providing said check site with reference data associated with said ETSN;
- (g) generating a second message authentication code using said ETSN and said per-card key;
- (h) routing said second message authentication code to said check site based on said BIN associated with said check site;
- (i) determining said per-card key associated with the payment account number of an unverified message authentication code having associated ETSN and reference data;
- (j) verifying said second message authentication code by said check site using said determined per-card key, and said associated ETSN and reference data.

7. (previously presented): The method of claim 6 further including, after the step of generating a second message authentication code, the following steps:

(a) converting said second message authentication code into a pseudo expiration date using said reference data;

(b) generating an authorization request having an expiration date field containing said pseudo expiration date; and

(c) responding to said authorization request and verifying said second message authentication code based on said pseudo expiration date.

8. (previously presented): The method of claim 7 wherein the step of generating a message authentication code further includes using an expiration date, application version number and transaction sequence number associated with said payment account number.

9. (previously presented): The method of claim 8 wherein said MAC verification request further includes said application version number and said expiration date.

10. (previously presented): The method of claim 9, wherein said step of verifying said MAC includes using said per-card key.

11. (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein said reference data includes a reference data and a number of months indicator.